

January 2012 Newsletter

CIRM January Newsletter

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- CIRM Board Approves Initiatives to Accelerate Stem Cell Therapies
- CIRM Board Approves Human Pluripotent Stem Cell Bank Initiative
- CIRM Spotlight on Heart Failure Video Now Available
- JDRF Supports CIRM Diabetes Disease Team Led by Viacyte
- CIRM Appoints Biotech Executive Matthew Plunkett as CFO
- Upcoming Events

CIRM Board Approves Initiatives to Accelerate Stem Cell Therapies

On December 8th, the CIRM governing board approved a \$15 million External Innovation Initiative to proactively discover and fund innovative research within the jurisdiction of any of the agency's external collaboration network of funding partners. Also approved was a \$12 million Bridging Fund initiative to provide continuous support to successful research programs. These two initiatives along with the Strategic Partnership Funding Program, approved at the October board meeting, form the agency's Opportunity Fund which aims to enhance CIRM's efforts to speed the development of new stem cell-based therapies

- [Read the press release](#)

CIRM Board Approves Human Pluripotent Stem Cell Bank Initiative

The CIRM governing board approved a concept proposal for an initiative to create a new stem cell bank. In recent years, human pluripotent stem cells (both embryonic stem cells and reprogrammed iPS cells) are emerging as excellent models for disease. CIRM has proposed creating a bank of cells carrying disease mutations and making those cells available to researchers in California and worldwide. This CIRM Human Pluripotent Stem Cell Initiative will consist of three Requests for Applications (RFAs).

- [Read about the initiative](#)

Spotlight on Heart Failure Video Now Available

A video recording of the December 8th Spotlight on Heart Failure seminar is now available online. The video features Eduardo Marbán, MD, PhD, principle investigator of the CIRM Heart Failure Disease Team and director of the Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute. Marbán's team is developing a procedure that uses cardiac stem cells to regenerate scarred heart tissue injured after a heart attack. Two patient advocates also spoke including a participant in Marbán's clinical trial study.



- [Watch the seminar](#)

JDRF Supports CIRM Diabetes Disease Team Led by Viacyte

On December 13th, Viacyte's CIRM-funded diabetes disease team received additional funding from the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF). The Viacyte team is working toward a stem cell-based therapy for type 1 diabetes. The co-funding will support pre-clinical studies leading to submission of a FDA application to test safety and efficacy people with T1D. This partnership brings collaborative funding leveraged by CIRM to more than \$60 million for this disease team.

- [Read about the collaboration](#)
- [Read more about CIRM's collaborative funding partnerships](#)

CIRM Appoints Biotech Executive Matthew Plunkett as CFO

In early December, CIRM named Matthew Plunkett, Ph.D., as its first Chief Financial Officer. Plunkett will lead the finance function and implementation of the industry loan award program. He will work toward building stronger relationships with California companies engaged in stem cell research to achieve success in the complex clinical development process. Plunkett joins CIRM with a breadth of biotechnology experience in research, finance and strategic planning.



- [Read the press release](#)

Upcoming Events

ICOC Governing Board Meeting / Spotlight on Disease

The CIRM governing board will hold its first meeting of 2012 on January 17th in San Diego. The lunch-hour Spotlight on Disease seminar will focus on recent advances in genomics and features Craig Venter, president of the J. Craig Venter Institute. For a sneak preview of Venter's presentation, watch his 2011 CIRM Grantee Meeting keynote address.

Upcoming Request for Applications (RFAs) Deadlines

RFA 11-03: CIRM Basic Biology Awards IV - pre-applications due January 10th

RFA 11-04: CIRM Creativity Awards - applications due January 10th

RFA 10-05: CIRM Disease Team Therapy Development Awards - applications due January 25th (With limited exceptions, receipt of a Planning Award is a prerequisite for submission of an application)

RFA 09-04: CIRM Research Leadership Awards - applications due January 11th

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